

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2374

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PGOV, AR

SUBJ: ISABEL CAPTIVATES LABOR AUDIENCE

SUMMARY: APRIL 4 PROGRAMMED DISCUSSION BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND LABOR LEADERS ON LABORS COMPLAINTS AGAINST LOPEZ REGA AND OTHER GOA OFFICIALS WAS NOT HELD. INSTEAD IN IMPASSIONED EXTEMPTANEOUS SPEECH AT CGT, ISABLE PERON CAPTIVATED LABOR LEADERS WITH HER PLEADING FOR LABORS UNDERSTANDING AND HELP. FOR FIRST TIME LABOR EXPRESSED REAL AFFECTION FOR ISABEL. ALTHOUGH MAJOR DIFFERENCES STILL UNRESOLVED, RAPPORT ESTABLISHED OFFERS PROSPECT THAT THEY WILL BE SATISFACTORILY ACCOMMODATED. END SUMMARY.

1. HERALDED SHOWDOWN BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND LABOR OVER EXCESSIVE POWER OF LOPEZ REGA AND LABORS LACK OF INFLUENCE IN GOVT AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS FAILED TO MATERIALIZE DURING ISABELS APRIL 4 VISIT TO CGT. LABOR LEADERS REPORTEDLY DECIDED THAT NOTHING SHOULD SPOIL MRS. PERONS WARM WELCOME TO CGT; HENCE PROGRAMMED BEHIND CLOSED DOORS DISCUSSION OF ISSUES AND PRESENTATION OF LABORS DEMANDS WAS POSTPONED. INSTEAD VISIT WAS LIMITED TO PROTOCOL WELCOME BY CGT AND 62 ORGANIZATIONS OFFICERS, FOLLOWED BY PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO ASSEMBLED LABOR LEADERS. IN ONLY DIRECT REFERENCE TO THOSE ISSUES, CGT SEC GEN HERRERAS THANKED PRESIDENT "FOR HAVING GIVEN LABOR GREATER PARTICIPATION IN CONDUCT OF THE GOVT", HERREAS ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT PRESIDENT HAD PRESENTED CGT DECREE GRANTING IT CONTROL OF NEWSPAPER

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DEMOCRACIA.

2. SPURNING HERE PREPARED SPEECH (DOUBTLESS WRITTEN BY LOPEZ REGA), ISABEL EMERGED FROM HERE HERETOFORE COLD, IMPERSONAL SHELL TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF A DEDICATED, DETERMINED, BUT ABOVE ALL WARM HUMAN BEING. AT THE CONCLUSION OF HER IMPASSIONED, EXTEMPORANEOUS DISCOURSE, A CAPTIVATED AUDIENCE OF PREVIOUSLY HOSTILE LABOR LEADERS WERE CHANTING "CGT EMBRACES ISABEL" AND "ISABEL AND LORENZO (MIGUEL), UNITED ONCE AGAIN". THAT CAPTIVATION STEMMED MAINLY FROM HER MANNER AND HER OPEN APPEAL FOR LABORS HELP AND UNDERSTANDING RATHER THAN FROM ANY SUBSTANTIVE ARGUMENTS.

3. BY THE END OF HER PRESENTATION ISABEL ALSO APPARENTLY EXPERIENCED A NEVER BEFORE ESTABLISHED SENSE OF COMMUNICATION WITH LABOR. ADMITTING THAT SHE HAD "BREAKFASTED WITH HER STOMACH TIED IN KNOTS" IN FEAR OF THE MEETING, SHE SAID THAT FROM THE ACTUAL ENCOUNTER SHE HAD RECEIVED "A NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE INJECTION OF MULTIPLE VITAMINS". SHE CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT HENCEFORTH HER OFFICE WOULD BE OPEN "EVERY DAY" TO THE WORKERS.

4. AT NO TIME DID ISABEL OPENLY CHARGE LABOR WITH BEING HOSTILE TO HER, ALTHOUGH IT APPEARED SHE MIGHT DO SO AT THE BEGINNING OF HER TALK. APPEARING TENSE BUT DETERMINED, SHE BEGAN BY AFFIRMING THAT "NOTHING NOR NO ONE" WOULD STOP HER FROM CARRYING OUT GENERAL PERONS DESIRES. BOTH HERRERAS AND MIGUEL LOOKED WORRIED AT FIRST, HOWEVER THEY BECAME MORE RELAXED AS ISABEL BEGAN TO WIN OVER HER AUDIENCE WITH HER APPEALS FOR HELP AND UNDERSTANDING, AND AS SHE RESPONDED IN KIND TO THE SHOW OF AFFECTION SHE MANAGED TO EVOKE.

5. LOPEZ REGA ACCOMPANIED ISABEL, BUT CONTRARY TO PAST EXPERIENCES HE GAVE NO INDICATION OF BEING IN COMAND OF HER OR OF THE SITUATION. LABORS DISLIKE OF HIM WAS EVIDENT. HIS PRESENCE WAS BARELY ACKNOWLEDED AND ALTHOUGH HE SAT NEXT TO MIGUEL NOT A WORD PASSED BETWEEN THEM DURING THE ENTIRE PUBLIC SESSION. ALSO WHEN ISABEL STATED SHE WOULD RETURN FREQUENTLY, CHANTS OF "COME BY YOURSELF" ECHOED THOUGHOUT THE HALL.

6. COMMENT: SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ISABEL AND LABOR
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DOUBTELESS WERE NOT RESOLVED, BUT MEETING WAS POSITIVE AND SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO FAVORABWE ATMOSPHERE TO NEGOTIATE THOSE DIFFERENCES. AT A MINIMUM LABOR APPEARS TO HAVE GAINED PROSPECT OF MAINTAINING FREQUENT DIALOGUE WITH PRESIDENT AND STRAINED RELATIONS HAVE BEEN EASED,AT LEAT TEMPORARILY. WHETHER OF NOT RAPPORT AND AFFECTION CAN BE MAINTAINED IS NOT CLEAR. THE ROLE LOPEZ REGA PLAYS COULD WELL BE THE KEY. THAT HE HAS OPPOSED AND WILL CONTINUE TO OPPOSE THE COMING

TOGETHER OF LABOR AND MRS. PERON IS UNQUESTIONED. IN THIS
MRS. PERON IS STILL FACED WITH A KNOTTY PROBLEM. WHAT IS
INVOLVED IS NOT SIMPLY A PERSONALITY CLASH. LABOR IS PRESSING
FOR INCREASED PARTICIPATION AND POWER. LOPEZ REGA WANTS TO
PROTECT IT FOR HIMSELF. WHETHER THERE CAN BE ANY REAL MODUS
VIVENDI WITH LABOR SO LONG AS LOPEZ REGA IS IN A POSITION OF
POWER REMAINS TO BE SEEN. HERRERAS REFERENCE TO "LABORS
GREATER PARTICIPATION" WAS, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, INTRIGUING.

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